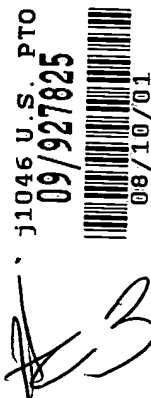


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PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In Re Patent Application Of)
)
OTA et al.)
)
Serial No.: To Be Assigned)
)
Filing Date: Herewith)
)
For: **DIGITAL CONTENTS SALES**)
METHOD AND SYSTEM)



INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.97, a list of documents is disclosed on the attached Form PTO-1449 that may be material to the examination of this application. Listed Documents are foreign patents and are enclosed herewith.

Documents for which the supplied date of publication lists the year of publication without the month were published sufficiently earlier than the effective U.S. filing date and any foreign priority date, so that the particular month of publication is not in issue. Pursuant to §609 of the MPEP, it is understood that the month of publication is not required when the particular month of publication is not in issue.

No inferences should be drawn that the attached list represents a comprehensive investigation, or that any material disclosed is equivalent to the subject invention. In addition, none of the documents that have publication dates prior to the priority date of the above application anticipate the invention in this application.

The cited document(s) disclose numerous specific features. There has been no attempt to list each and every feature disclosed by each document. The Examiner is requested to review the document(s) and determine the extent of the materiality of the document disclosures with respect to the present invention.

Serial No. To Be Assigned

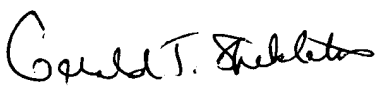
Applicant avers that no art cited herein was cited in a communication from a foreign Patent Office in a counterpart foreign application or, to the knowledge of the person signing the certification after making reasonable inquiry, was known to any individual designated in §1.56(c) more than three months prior to the filing of this Statement.

The discussion of any art and the citation of any document(s) herein is not to be construed as an admission that the art or document disclosure is necessarily within the invention field of endeavor, that the art or document disclosure is necessarily prior in time to a particular date which may be relevant to the instant patent application, and/or that the art or document disclosure is otherwise necessarily prior art as defined by the patent law with respect to the instant invention and application.

Also, there is reserved the right to later set forth how the instant invention is distinguished over the disclosure of any document or other art, including the disclosures of the art and document(s) recited herein, that may be cited by the Examiner in rejecting a claim in the instant patent application. The recitation herein of the art and document(s) is not to be construed as an assertion that more pertinent art could not possibly be in existence.

Respectfully submitted,

WELSH & KATZ, LTD.

By 
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08/10/01

[C-652US]

To comply with the duty of information disclosure, we enclose copies of four background art documents, which are:

1. Japanese Patent Application Laid-Open No. 10-78989
2. Japanese Patent Application Laid-Open No. 10-254968
3. Japanese Patent Application Laid-Open No. 11-203561
4. Japanese Patent Application Laid-Open No. 2001-167332
(corresponding to U.S. S.N. 09/672476)

English Abstracts of the above-listed documents 1-3 are also enclosed; however, An English Abstract of the document 4 is not readily available.

The document 1 discloses a point service system for a virtual shopping center wherein, on a network, points corresponding to a price of purchased goods are issued to a user.

The document 2 discloses a point management system wherein, by adding through a network the point number corresponding to a clicked position to a point database managed for each user, the point is accumulated in a real time manner.

The document 3 discloses a card customer control system wherein, customer identification data is acquired via a network and a usage status of a customer is managed based on the customer identification data.

The document 4 discloses a promotion method and a system wherein a user simply transmits points presented upon a sale of merchandise to a center device by means of a telecommunication device such as a portable telephone set, a personal computer, etc. and the points are added in the center device.